

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. In a computing system that is in communication with at least one application, a method for controlling how the contact information is provided to one or more applications, the method comprising:

detecting a request from an application for desired contact information;

in response to the request, selecting an appropriate contact persona from one or more possible contact personas that are available to the computing system, each contact persona comprising available contact information;

identifying at least some of the available contact information that is intended to be provided to the application in response to the request and determining an appropriate format in which the identified contact information will be presented to the application.

presenting to the user the information that is intended to be provided to the application and allowing the user to determine whether that information will actually be actually provided to the application and whether other information will be provided to the application; and

providing the identified contact information in the appropriate format to the application as designated by the user.

2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein each of the available contact personas correspond to a single user of the computing system.

3. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein selecting the appropriate contact persona occurs in response to user selection of one of the possible contact personas.

4. A method as recited in claim 3, wherein a listing of the possible contact personas are presented to the user for selection.

5. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein identifying at least some of the available contact information to be presented to the application occurs through user selection of the available contact information.

6. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein identifying at least some of the available contact information to be presented to the application occurs automatically in response to default settings corresponding to the appropriate contact persona.

7. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein identifying at least some of the available contact information to be presented to the application in response to the request includes determining what the contact information will be used for.

8. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:
determining whether the application has authorization to access the requested contact information.

9. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein upon determining the application has authorization to access the requested contact information, the appropriate contact persona is automatically selected the identified contact information is automatically identified and provided to the application in the appropriate format.

10. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein it is determined that the application has authorization based upon one or more authorizations provided in an access control list of the computing system.

11. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the application requesting information is hosted on a remote system that is in communication with the computing system through the Internet.

12. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the application requesting the contact information is hosted by the computing system.

13. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the requested contact information includes at least one of a name and an address.

14. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the available contact information corresponding to a first contact persona differs from the available contact information corresponding to a second contact persona, and even though the first and second contact personas both correspond to the same entity.

15. In a computing system that is in communication with at least one application, a method for controlling how the contact information is provided to one or more applications, the method comprising:

providing an interface object for allowing a user to select a contact persona from a plurality of possible contact personas, each contact persona corresponding to a person and respective contact information about the person, wherein the respective contact information corresponding to a first contact persona differs from the available contact information corresponding to a second contact persona, even though the first and second contact personas are both associated with the same person;

in response to a user selection of a particular contact persona, displaying the respective contact information corresponding to the selected contact persona; and

enabling the user to modify the respective contact information corresponding to the selected contact persona; and

upon an application seeking contact information from the computing system, providing the respective contact information corresponding to the selected contact persona.

16. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the interface object is displayed in response to a request by the application for contact information.

17. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the respective contact information is displayed with one or more privacy policies of the application that specify at least one of how and when the contact information will be used by the application.

18. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the requesting application is hosted on a remote system that is in communication with the computing system through the Internet.

19. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the requesting application is hosted by the computing system.

20. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the requested contact information includes at least one of a name and an address.

21. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the contact personas are associated with a logged on user of the computing system.

22. A computer program product for use in a computing system that is in communication with at least one application, the computer program product comprising one or more computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions for implementing a method for controlling how the contact information is provided to one or more applications, the method comprising:

detecting a request from an application for desired contact information;

in response to the request, selecting an appropriate contact persona from one or more possible contact personas that are available to the computing system, each contact persona comprising available contact information;

identifying at least some of the available contact information that is intended to be provided to the application in response to the request and determining an appropriate format in which the identified contact information will be presented to the application;

presenting to the user the information that is intended to be provided to the application and allowing the user to determine whether that information will actually be actually provided to the application and whether other information will be provided to the application; and

providing the identified contact information in the appropriate format to the application as designated by the user.

23. A computer program product as recited in claim 22, wherein each of the available contact personas correspond to a single user of the computing system.

24. A computer program product as recited in claim 22, wherein selecting the appropriate contact persona occurs in response to user selection of one of the possible contact personas.

25. A computer program product as recited in claim 24, wherein a listing of the possible contact personas are presented to the user for selection.

26. A computer program product as recited in claim 22, wherein identifying at least some of the available contact information to be presented to the application occurs through user selection of the available contact information.

27. A computer program product as recited in claim 22, wherein identifying at least some of the available contact information to be presented to the application occurs automatically in response to default settings corresponding to the appropriate contact persona.

28. A computer program product as recited in claim 22, wherein identifying at least some of the available contact information to be presented to the application in response to the request includes determining what the contact information will be used for.

29. A computer program product as recited in claim 22, wherein the method further comprises:

determining whether the application has authorization to access the requested contact information.

30. A computer program product as recited in claim 29, wherein upon determining the application has authorization to access the requested contact information, at least one of the appropriate contact persona and the identified contact information is automatically selected and provided to the application in the appropriate format.

31. A computer program product as recited in claim 29, wherein it is determined that the application has authorization based upon one or more authorizations provided in an access control list of the computing system.

32. A computer program product as recited in claim 22, wherein the application requesting information is hosted on a remote system that is in communication with the computing system through the Internet.

33. A computer program product as recited in claim 22, wherein the application requesting the contact information is hosted by the computing system.

34. A computer program product as recited in claim 22, wherein the requested contact information includes at least one of a name and an address.

35. A computer program product as recited in claim 22, wherein the available contact information corresponding to a first contact persona differs from the available contact information corresponding to a second contact persona, and even though the first and second contact personas both correspond to the same entity.

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36. In a computing system that is in communication with at least one application, a method for controlling how the contact information is provided to one or more applications, the method comprising:

providing an interface object for allowing a user to select a contact persona from a plurality of possible contact personas, each contact persona corresponding to a person and respective contact information about the person, wherein the respective contact information corresponding to a first contact persona differs from the available contact information corresponding to a second contact persona, even though the first and second contact personas are both associated with the same person;

in response to a user selection of a particular contact persona, displaying the respective contact information corresponding to the selected contact persona; and

enabling the user to modify the respective contact information corresponding to the selected contact persona; and

upon an application seeking contact information from the computing system, providing the respective contact information corresponding to the selected contact persona.

37. A computer program product as recited in claim 36, wherein the interface object is displayed in response to a request by the application for contact information.

38. A computer program product as recited in claim 36, wherein the respective contact information is displayed with one or more privacy policies of the application that specify at least one of how and when the contact information will be used by the application.

39. A computer program product as recited in claim 36, wherein the requesting application is hosted on a remote system that is in communication with the computing system through the Internet.

40. One or more computer-readable media having a data structure thereon that represents an application programming interface configured to control the presentation of a person's contact information to a requesting application, the data structure comprising:

computer-executable instructions for accessing a plurality of contact personas, each contact persona comprising contact information corresponding to the person;

computer-executable instructions for receiving a request from an application for contact information about the person;

computer-executable instructions for providing appropriate contact information to the application and as specified by an appropriate one of the contact personas, wherein the appropriate contact persona is determined in response to user input selecting the contact persona.

41. A method for controlling how the contact information is provided to an application, the method comprising:

the application requesting contact information from a computing system having access to the contact information;

receiving the contact information from the computing system, wherein the contact information was identified and selected by the computing system in response to a user selecting an appropriate contact persona from one or more possible contact personas that are available to the computing system, each contact persona comprising available contact information defining the user in a different way;

wherein prior to receiving the contact information, the available contact information corresponding to the selected persona is displayed to the user in such a manner as to allow the user to select which of the corresponding available information will be provided to the application; and

providing the contact information from the corresponding available contact information to the application as selected by the user.